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The early learning experiences of **Métis children in Canada**

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.	not available for any reference period
..	not available for a specific reference period
...	not applicable
0	true zero or a value rounded to zero
0s	value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
p	preliminary
r	revised
x	suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
E	use with caution
F	too unreliable to be published

The Early Learning Experiences of Métis Children in Canada

Young Métis children have the opportunity to learn in different places and with different people. This fact sheet describes the early learning experiences of 2- to 5- year-old Métis children in Canada, using data from the 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey.

Young Métis children in Canada

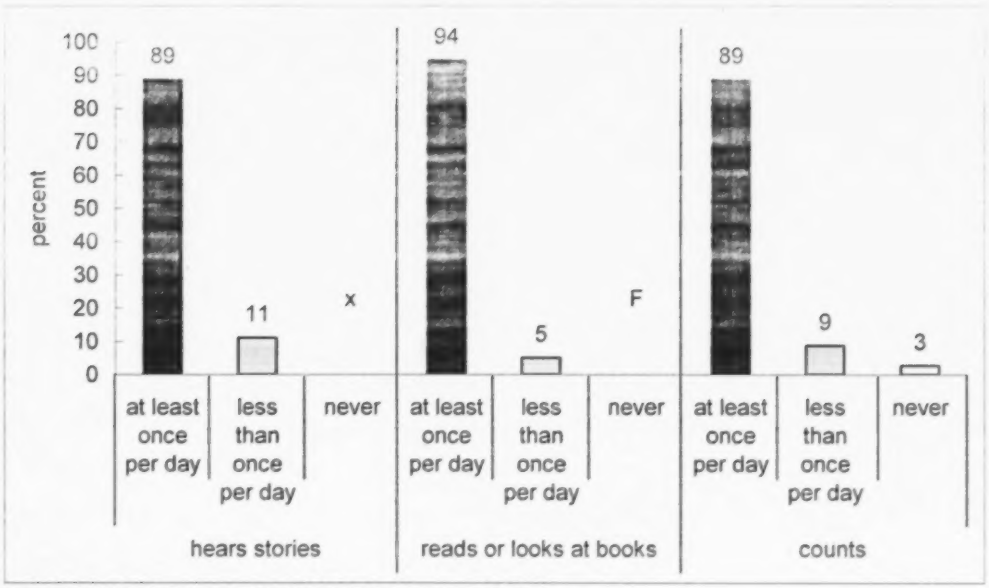
According to the 2006 Census, there are approximately 35,000 Métis children under the age of six in Canada, representing almost 10% of the overall Métis population. Most young Métis children (89%) are growing up in the western provinces and Ontario. In Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories, where the Métis population makes up a substantial share of the overall population, young Métis children represent almost one in 10 of all young children in the region.

➢ In what ways do children learn about words?

Hearing stories, reading books and counting can help children learn about words, language, and culture (Canadian Council on Learning, 2006a).

- Nine out of 10 2- to 5- year-old Métis children do each of the following at least once a day: hear stories, read or look at books, and count.
- 99% of Métis children do at least one of these activities daily. Eight out of 10 Métis children do all three activities daily.

Chart 1
The majority of Métis children aged 2 to 5 hear stories, read books, and count once a day or more



Source(s): Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006.

➢ What is the play environment for Métis children?

Play is an important part of children's learning because it helps them to develop social, physical, and emotional skills (Canadian Council on Learning, 2006b). Both outdoor play and creative play (like arts and crafts and pretend play) can have a positive impact on children's physical and mental well-being.

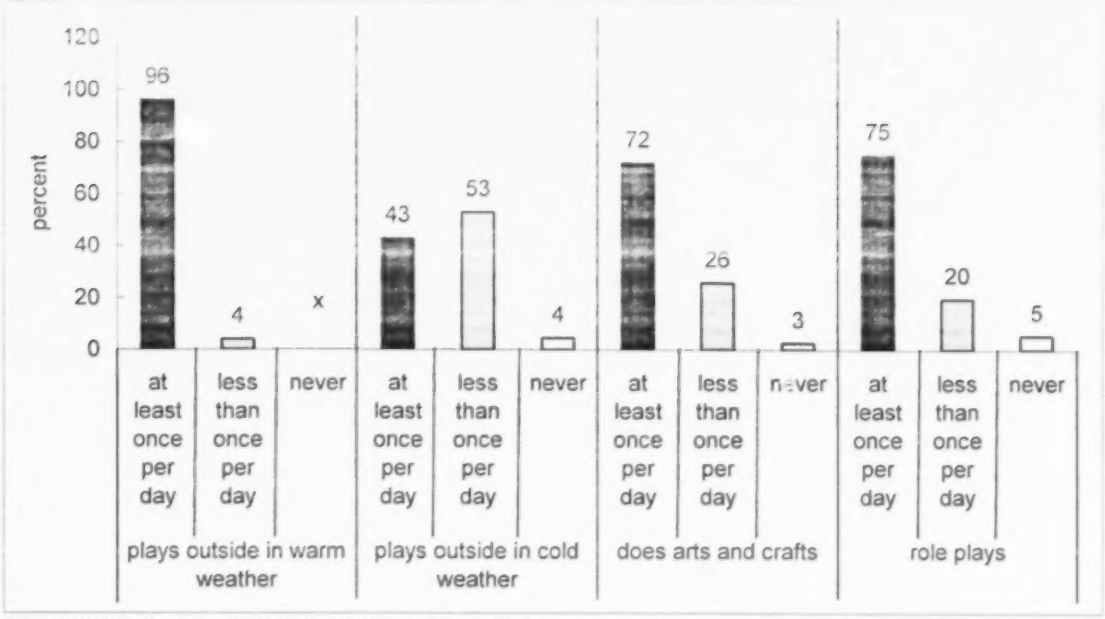
- The majority of young Métis children aged 2 to 5 years play outside every day in warm weather (96%). About two out of five play outside every day in cold weather, while another half of children play outside less than once a day in cold weather.

- Three out of four Métis children do arts and crafts and participate in role playing games (pretend play like playing house or school) every day.

- 99% of Métis children do at least one of these activities daily (play outside in either warm or cold weather, arts and crafts, role playing games). Three out of five Métis children do all of these activities daily.

Chart 2

Almost all Métis children aged 2 to 5 play outside everyday in warm weather; Three out of four engage in creative play daily



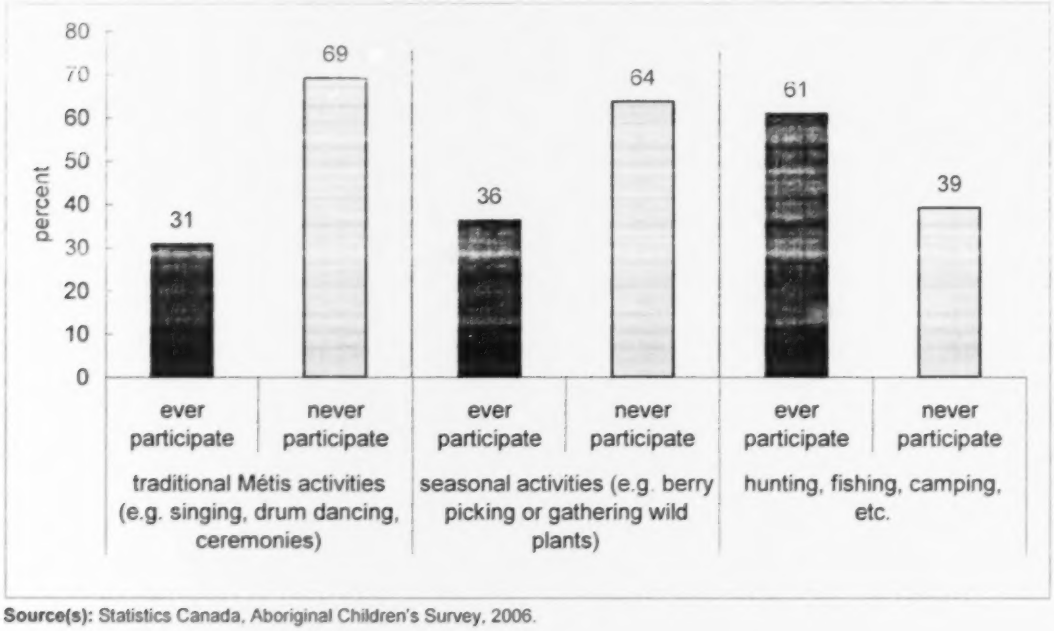
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006.

How many children participate in traditional activities?

Young Métis children can learn about their culture from participating in traditional and seasonal activities.

- About a third of Métis children participate in traditional activities such as singing, drum dancing, or traditional ceremonies. Three out of five Métis children go hunting, fishing, or camping.
- About one in three Métis children participate in seasonal activities such as berry picking or gathering wild plants.
- Three out of four Métis children participate in at least one of the three activities, 14% participate in all three activities, while 26% do not participate in any traditional or seasonal activities.

Chart 3
One out of three Métis children under six years old participate in traditional or seasonal activities; two out of three go hunting, fishing, camping



Source(s): Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006.

➢ Who helps children learn?

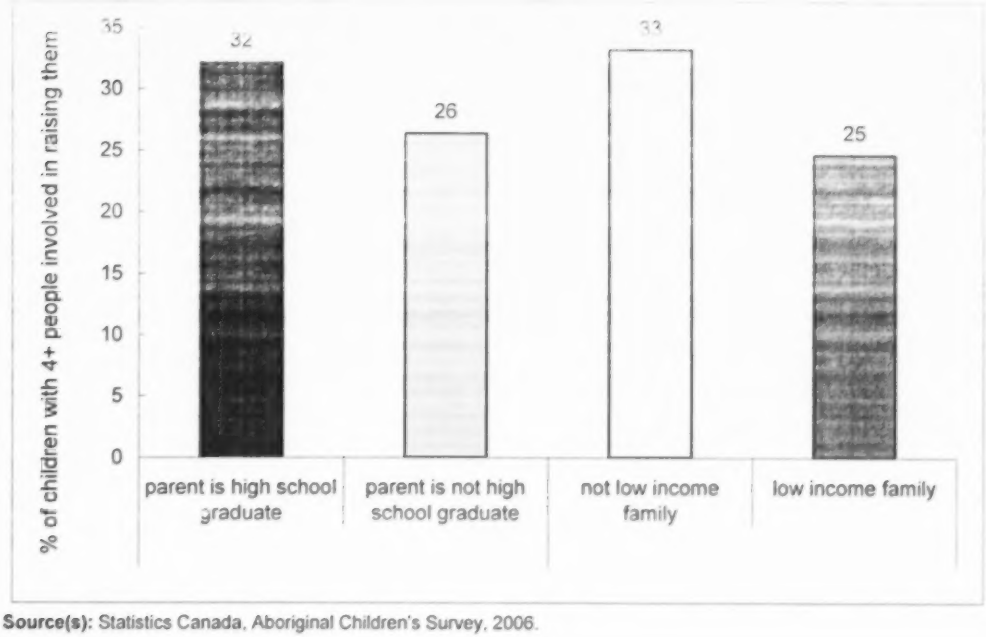
- Many people are involved in raising Métis children (Statistics Canada, 2008b). One-third of Métis children are raised by four or more people. The majority of the time this includes the mother (95% of children) and father (77% of children). It also often included a grandparent (40% of children), other relative (21% or children) or non-relative (18% of children).

- The percentage of Métis children with more than four people raising them was higher for children with parents who have graduated from high school compared with those whose parents were non-graduates and for children living in higher income families.

- One in three Métis children were living with a lone parent. Métis children living with two parents were more likely to have four or more people involved in raising them compared to children living with a lone parent.

- About one-third of Métis children have someone to help them understand Métis culture and history. This person is usually a parent or grandparent, but sometimes is an aunt or uncle, or a teacher or child care provider.

Chart 4
Métis children under six years old were more likely to have four or more people involved in raising them if they had parents who were high school graduates or lived in higher income families



Source(s): Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006.

➢ Where do children learn?

Many children are also involved in learning experiences outside of the home.

- About 14% of young Métis children attend child and parent programs (like 'Moms & Tots', 'The Dad Program', or 'Mother Goose').
- Eight out of ten 4- and 5- year-old Métis are in school.
- As well, some children participate in child care. About half of 2- to 5- year old Métis children attend child care. For children attending child care, the most common main type of child care arrangement is a daycare centre.

- Is participation in early learning activities related to parent education, family income, and having a lone parent?

Parents' education

- Métis children of high school graduates are more likely than children of non-graduates to participate in language and play activities on a daily basis. About 81% of children of high school graduates hear stories, read or look at books and count every day compared to 72% of children of non-high school graduates.

- Similarly, 59% of Métis children of high school graduates do all four play activities at least once a day (play outside, do arts and crafts and role play), compared to 48% children of non-high school graduates.

Income

- Young Métis children living in low income families are less likely to engage in language and play activities or to go hunting, fishing or camping. They are, however, more likely to engage in traditional activities like singing, dancing and drumming than Métis children from higher income families.

Lone parent

- There are no differences in participation in language and play activities for Métis children living with a lone parent compared to children living with two parents.

- Métis children living with a lone parent are more likely to have participated in traditional activities like singing or dancing, but less likely to have gone hunting, fishing, or camping compared to children living with two parents.

What you should know about this fact sheet

The Aboriginal Children's Survey was developed by Statistics Canada and Aboriginal advisors from across the country and was conducted jointly with Human Resources and Social Development Canada. The survey took place between October 2006 and March 2007. Parents or guardians of approximately 10,500 Aboriginal children under six years of age, including almost 4,000 Métis children, provided information through a combination of personal and telephone interviews. The overall response rate for the survey was 81.1%.

For this survey, the parent or guardian responded on behalf of the child. For the majority of Métis children (93%), this person was the birth mother or father. Grandparents, foster parents, and adoptive parents made up the majority of the remaining parents or guardians who responded to the survey for Métis children.

In this fact sheet, 'Métis children' include those whose parents or guardians identified them as Métis on the Aboriginal Children's Survey in response to the question: 'Is (child) an Aboriginal person, that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuk?' Métis children include those who were identified as Métis only and those identified as Métis in combination with another Aboriginal group, either First Nations or Inuit.

For more detailed information on the survey, please consult the *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006: Concepts and Methods Guide* (Statistics Canada catalogue number 89-634).

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